

WONDERFUL WORK

POWERFUL INSIGHTS

FEBRUARY 2025

This is the first in a market intelligence series from **Tonic**, designed to help businesses navigate the evolving world of work. At Tonic, we believe in creating Wonderful Work That Works, work that inspires, engages, and delivers real impact. Through this new series, we bring you sharp, data-driven insights into talent trends, employer branding, and workplace culture, with a special focus on the UAE. Whether you're looking to attract top talent, enhance employee experience, or future-proof your company culture, our insights will help keep you ahead of the curve.

As trust in leadership around most of the world declines and workplace belonging becomes more critical, organisations must rethink how they connect with their people. In the UAE, 2025 has been declared the "Year of Community", reinforcing the importance of trust, inclusion, and connection at work.

This edition explores the role of trust between people and their employers, how to foster a sense of belonging, and an untapped opportunity, positioning the UAE as not just a place to work, but a place to call home.

With insights from Tonic's own research team, Edelman's Trust Barometer, and community discussions, we share practical ways to build stronger employer brands in a changing world.

THE FUTURE OF WORK ISN'T JUST ABOUT JOBS, IT'S ABOUT COMMUNITY, CULTURE, AND CONNECTION. LET'S BUILD WONDERFUL WORK THAT WORKS.

NAVIGATING THE TALENT TRENDS THAT IMPACT EMPLOYERS IN THE UAE



**2025 IS THE
UAE YEAR OF
COMMUNITY.
WHY DOES
THAT MATTER
MORE TODAY
THAN EVER?**

GLOBALLY, WE'RE SEEING A DECLINE IN TRUST

This year, Edelman celebrates the 25th anniversary of its iconic **Trust Barometer**, and it's here that we're starting. 2024 was a significant year for elections in many global markets, but this hasn't improved trust into 2025. **Average trust** in institutions (business, government, media & NGOs) remains **at just 56% across markets, a concerning low.**

In recent years, we've seen that trust is no longer optional. It's the foundation of any **successful employer brand**. However, trust in organisations is in decline. The **2025 Trust Barometer** reveals that in turbulent times, employees gravitate toward organisations that communicate **transparently and authentically.**

Overall trust levels continue to slip. Nearly **60% of professionals** say trust in leadership **directly influences** their loyalty and engagement. In the UAE, trust in leadership has **fallen by 7%** over the past year alone.

At the **Resourcing Leaders Summit last year**, we had some fascinating discussions around trust—how organisations can foster it, why it's becoming more critical than ever, and the risks of getting it wrong. One key takeaway? Trust isn't just about what you say; it's about **what you do**. And increasingly, it's about **where and how people connect.**



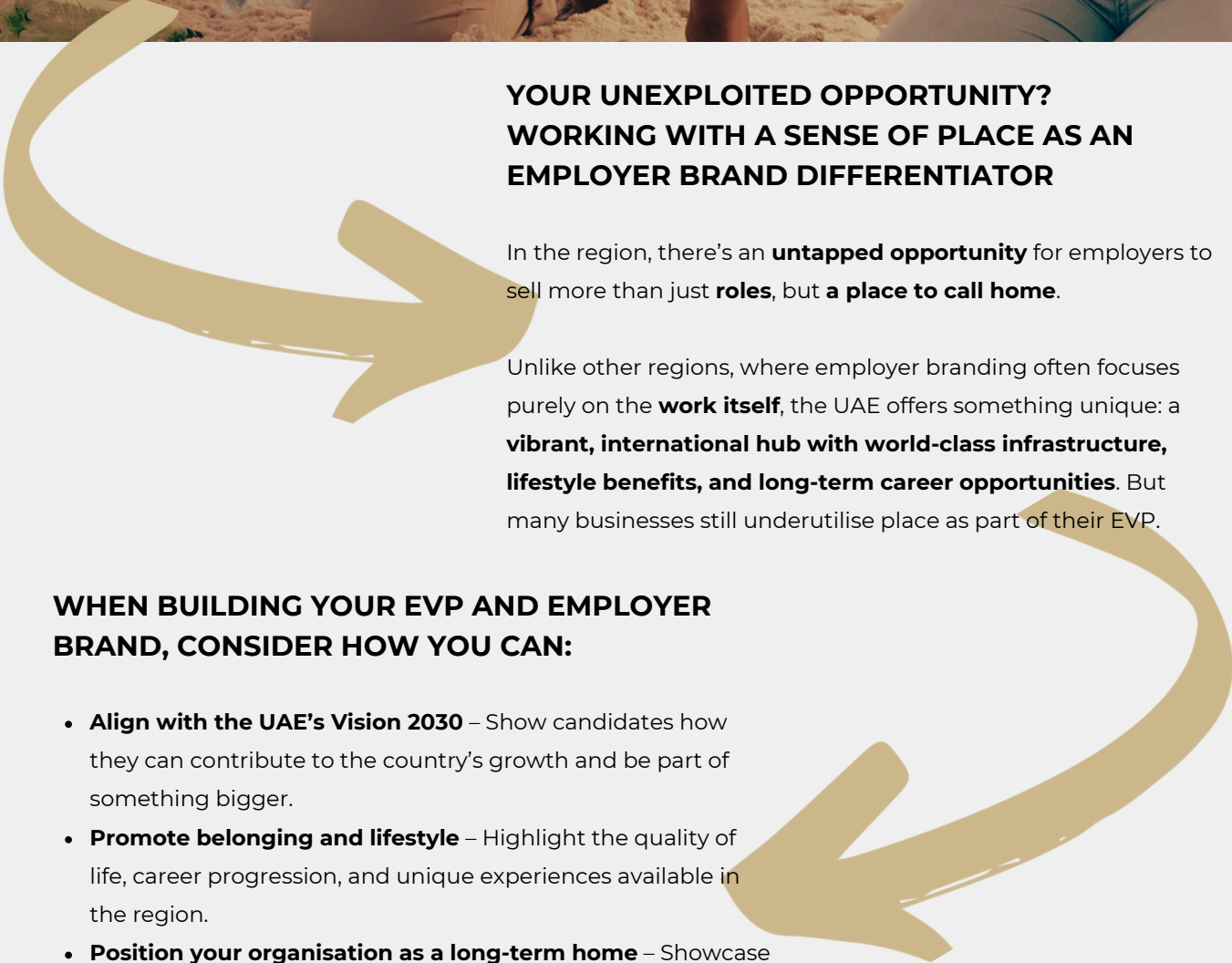
THE UAE YEAR OF COMMUNITY: WHY THIS MATTERS NOW MORE THAN EVER

2025 is officially the UAE “Year of Community”, reinforcing the importance of connection, belonging, and trust. Central to how we think about employer branding.

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT WORKPLACE CONNECTION IS ESSENTIAL:

- 61% of workers in the UAE struggle with well-being, impacting productivity.
- 26% of employees experience daily loneliness, higher than the global average.
- 94% of professionals in a 2023 Forbes study said workplace belonging is “very or somewhat important” to them.

People are looking for more than just jobs. They’re searching for a sense of place, community, and connection at work. **Organisations that prioritise this will build stronger employer brands and deeper loyalty.**



YOUR UNEXPLOITED OPPORTUNITY? WORKING WITH A SENSE OF PLACE AS AN EMPLOYER BRAND DIFFERENTIATOR

In the region, there’s an **untapped opportunity** for employers to sell more than just **roles**, but a **place to call home**.

Unlike other regions, where employer branding often focuses purely on the **work itself**, the UAE offers something unique: a **vibrant, international hub with world-class infrastructure, lifestyle benefits, and long-term career opportunities**. But many businesses still underutilise place as part of their EVP.

WHEN BUILDING YOUR EVP AND EMPLOYER BRAND, CONSIDER HOW YOU CAN:

- **Align with the UAE’s Vision 2030** – Show candidates how they can contribute to the country’s growth and be part of something bigger.
- **Promote belonging and lifestyle** – Highlight the quality of life, career progression, and unique experiences available in the region.
- **Position your organisation as a long-term home** – Showcase career development, stability, and community-building initiatives.

PRACTICAL STEPS FOR BUILDING TRUST AND CONNECTION

1. People > Candidates – Build Your EVP with Humans in Mind

EVPs must reflect the reality of modern work. Where life and work are deeply intertwined. At Tonic, we take a human-centric approach to EVP development, using behavioural science techniques like personality mapping and decision-making analysis to ensure EVPs resonate.

2. Align Your EVP & Employer Brand to a Bigger Purpose

Tying your Employer Brand to Vision 2030 can build trust by showing people how they contribute to the country's future. When crafting your EVP, embed messaging that connects employees to something greater than just their job.

3. SHOW, DON'T TELL – HARNESS THE POWER OF YOUR PEOPLE

88% of people trust recommendations from other people above all other marketing messages. Activating your Employer Brand means using real employee stories to demonstrate culture, impact, and trust. UGC (user-generated content) can significantly boost engagement and reach.

4. CONNECTION OVER BROADCAST – CREATE EXPERIENCES, NOT JUST CAMPAIGNS

The experience economy is booming. People engage more with brands that create meaningful experiences, rather than just broadcasting messages. Companies that invest in events, networking opportunities, and immersive experiences will foster greater belonging and become more attractive employers.

FEBRUARY'S FINAL THOUGHT

The world around us is evolving rapidly, and employer branding as a discipline, and as a business tool, needs to evolve with it. Trust, community, and connection are no longer nice-to-haves. They are essential pillars of successful organisations.

If you'd like to explore how to build trust, belonging, and place into your Employer Brand, let's talk.